

IN THE CLAIMS

1 (canceled)

2 (currently amended): A method of launching a software application in a hand-held device, comprising:

receiving an abbreviated textual command in a natural language search engine, entered by a user of the hand-held device; and

while receiving the abbreviated textual command, performing the steps of:

searching a natural language database that stores a data set of abbreviated textual commands and associated application commands;

analyzing historical preferences to determine one or more probable complete commands matching a currently received portion of the abbreviated textual command; and

displaying a list of probable complete commands matching the currently received portion of the abbreviated textual command;

if the user selects a complete command from the list, then setting the complete command as the abbreviated textual command, and executing the complete command; and

if the user does not select a complete command from the list, then receiving an entire abbreviated textual command from the user in the natural language search engine, by the user entering remaining characters of the entire abbreviated command to narrow the list of complete commands.

3-4 (canceled)

5 (currently amended): The method of claim [[4]] 2, further comprising:

if the abbreviated textual command has an exact match in the data set, then setting the exact match as a user command;

if the abbreviated textual command does not have an exact match in the data set, then analyzing historical preferences to determine if the abbreviated textual command has a probable match in the data set;

if the abbreviated textual command has a probable match in the data set, then setting the probable match as the user command;

if the abbreviated textual command does not have a probable match in the data set, then presenting a list of possible commands, receiving a command choice, and setting the command choice as the user command; and
executing the user command.

6 (previously presented): The method of claim 2, wherein the step of analyzing historical preferences is performed using a set of probability factors that are generated based on historical preferences, where the abbreviated textual command has a probable match in the data set when a probability factor associated with the probable match is greater than a predetermined value.

7 (previously presented): The method of claim 6, wherein the predetermined value is defined by a user.

8 (previously presented): The method of claim 6, comprising the additional step of:
adjusting the set of probability factors each time the abbreviated textual command is entered into the hand-held device.

9 (previously presented): The method of claim 2, wherein:
the abbreviated textual command has a first component and a second component, wherein the first component represents a desired application command, and the second component represents a desired application tag; and
the natural language database stores a data set of abbreviated textual commands and associated application commands and tags.

10 (previously presented): The method of claim 2, wherein the abbreviated textual command is entered into a graphical dialog box.

11 (previously presented): The method of claim 2, wherein the natural language search engine can receive the abbreviated textual command while any of the software applications are executing.

12 (previously presented): The method of claim 5, wherein the list of possible commands presented if the abbreviated textual command does not have a probable match in the data set includes a set of recently executed application commands.

13 (previously presented): The method of claim 5, wherein the list of possible commands presented if the abbreviated textual command does not have a probable match in the data set includes a set of generic application commands that the natural language search engine is capable of executing.

14-36 (canceled)

37 (currently amended): A method comprising:

storing a data set of abbreviated textual commands and corresponding complete commands;

receiving a portion of an abbreviated textual command being entered by a user; and

before receiving the entire abbreviated textual command, comparing the received portion of the abbreviated textual command to the stored abbreviated commands to determine a probable subset of the complete commands;

displaying the probable subset of the complete commands to the user; and

if the user selects one of the complete commands, then executing the selected complete command; and

if, instead of selecting a complete command, the user enters a further portion of the abbreviated textual command, then narrowing the probable subset based on said further portion.

38-40 (canceled)

41 (previously presented): The method of claim 37 further comprising:

when the probable subset consists of only one complete command, executing that one complete command.

42 (previously presented): The method of claim 37 wherein the storing step includes a user assigning which complete commands should correspond in the future to which abbreviated textual commands.

43 (previously presented): The method of claim 37 wherein the storing step includes generating the data set based on which abbreviated textual commands a user has historically used for choosing each complete command.

44 (previously presented): The method of claim 37 wherein the comparing step includes:

if the data set indicates that the user has chosen to execute a particular complete command more than a predetermined percentage of the time less than 100% after having entered an abbreviated textual command matching the currently received portion of text, then narrowing the subset to that command.

45 (previously presented): The method of claim 44 wherein the predetermined percentage is 50%.

46-47 (canceled)

48 (currently amended): A method comprising:

receiving a text string being entered by a user;

while receiving the text string, comparing a received portion of the text string to stored text commands to determine which of the stored text commands is a probable text command based on a portion of the probable text command matching the received text string; and

initiating a software operation corresponding to the probable text command;

the comparing and initiating steps being performed without the user having entered a delimiter denoting an end of the text string.

49 (previously presented): The method of claim 48 wherein said portion of the probable text command is not the entire text command.

50 (previously presented): The method of claim 48 wherein the comparing step includes:

identifying a plurality of the stored text commands that have portions matching the received text string; and

determining which one of the plurality is the probable text command based on historical preferences.

51-53 (canceled)

54 (currently amended): A method performed by a mobile communication device, comprising:

~~a database of user commands for initiating respective software applications; and~~

~~a natural language search engine configured to:~~

~~receive~~ receiving a command text string being entered by a user, the text string being in two-part format with one part being an abbreviation for a software application and the other part being an abbreviation for an object of the application;

~~determine~~ determining a probability that a particular command is likely desired by the user based both on the number of times the user has historically executed the particular application after entering the received text string and on the amount of time since the command was last invoked;

if the probability is below a threshold, then displaying the command to enable the user to select the command to be executed; and

~~execute~~ if the probability exceeds the threshold, then executing the particular command based on its probability being above a threshold, despite its probability being less than 1, and without determining the probabilities for other commands that might be desired by the user, and without the command being first displayed to and selected by the user.

55 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~56~~ 54 wherein the threshold is 0.5.

56 (currently amended): A method performed by a mobile communication device, comprising:

~~a database of user commands for initiating respective software applications; and~~

~~a natural language search engine configured to:~~

~~receive~~ receiving a command text string being entered by a user; and

~~display~~ displaying a list of frequently used commands from the database as soon as the user begins entering the command text string, for the user to select one of the commands from the list.